

INFLUENCE OF PERCEPTIONS OF COMPETENCE MASTERY ON SELF-CONFIDENCE WITH LEARNING INDEPENDENCE AS A MODERATING VARIABLE OF YOUNG DENTISTS IN A DENTAL HOSPITAL

Pengaruh Persepsi Penguasaan Kompetensi Terhadap Kepercayaan Diri yang Dimoderasi oleh Tingkat Kemandirian Belajar pada Dokter Gigi Muda di Rumah Sakit Gigi dan Mulut

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ABSTRAK

COVID-19 memberikan dampak besar di dunia pendidikan, termasuk studi dokter gigi muda di Rumah Sakit Gigi dan Mulut Universitas Padjadjaran (RSGM UNPAD). Dokter gigi muda memiliki tuntutan untuk memberikan pelayanan yang optimal, meskipun masa belajar dikurangi sesuai dengan peraturan yang berlaku. Hal ini tentunya memengaruhi persepsi penguasaan kompetensi yang dipengaruhi oleh tingkat kemandirian belajar. Lebih jauhnya, variabel tersebut akan berdampak pada tingkat kepercayaan diri dokter gigi muda. Oleh sebab itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh persepsi penguasaan kompetensi yang dimoderasi oleh kemandirian belajar terhadap kepercayaan diri dokter gigi muda di RSGM Universitas Padjadjaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kuantitatif dengan desain observasional analitik, menggunakan kuesioner untuk menguji pengaruh penguasaan kompetensi yang dimoderasi oleh kemandirian belajar, terhadap kepercayaan diri dokter gigi muda di RSGM UNPAD. Purposive sampling menghasilkan 89 responden yang berpartisipasi dalam mengisi kuesioner. Analisis data menggunakan IBM SPSS 27 dan uji regresi moderasi mengungkapkan pengaruh signifikan ($p < 0.05$) dari persepsi penguasaan kompetensi terhadap kepercayaan diri sebesar 23,1% serta kemandirian belajar dalam memoderasi interaksi persepsi penguasaan kompetensi terhadap kepercayaan diri secara parsial sebesar 1,7% ($p < 0,05$). Temuan ini menegaskan dampak signifikan dari persepsi kompetensi dokter gigi terhadap kepercayaan diri, dengan kemandirian belajar berperan sebagai moderator di antara dokter gigi muda di RSGM Universitas Padjadjaran.

Kata kunci: dokter gigi, kemandirian, kepaniteraan, kepercayaan diri, kompetensi

ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has had a major impact on the world of education, including the studies of young dentists at the Padjadjaran University Dental and Oral Hospital (RSGM UNPAD). Young dentists have demands to provide optimal service, even though the study period is reduced by applicable regulations. This of course influences the perception of competency mastery which is influenced by the level of learning independence. Furthermore, these variables will have an impact on the level of self-confidence of young dentists. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the influence of perceptions of competency mastery moderated by learning independence on the self-confidence of young dentists at RSGM Padjadjaran University. This study employed a quantitative research approach with an analytical observational design, utilizing a questionnaire to examine the influence of perceived competency mastery, moderated by learning

independence, on the self-confidence of young dentists at RSGM UNPAD. Purposive sampling was done with 89 respondents completing the questionnaire. Data analysis using IBM SPSS 27 and Moderated Regression Analysis test revealed a significant influence ($p < 0.05$) of perceived mastery of competence on self-confidence (23.1%). Furthermore, learning independence partially moderated this interaction (1.7%, $p < 0.05$). These findings underscore the significant impact of perceived dentist competence on self-confidence, with learning independence playing a moderating role among young dentists at RSGM Padjadjaran University.

Keywords: clerkship, competence, dentist, independence, self-confidence

INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, Indonesia confirmed its first COVID-19 cases, prompting significant changes in medical education and clinical learning. The pandemic disrupted traditional clinical practices, leading to a shift towards online learning and limited direct patient care for young doctors and dentists [1], [2]. The Indonesian Dental Association (PDGI) and Ministry of Education implemented measures to halt non-emergency dental care and shift learning methods [3]. However, despite these challenges, the number of COVID-19 cases began to decline in early 2022, allowing for the gradual resumption of dental practices and clinical activities [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6].

RSGM Unpad, a specialized dental and oral hospital in Bandung, Indonesia, plays a vital role in dental education and healthcare services [7]. Accredited by the Indonesian Hospital Accreditation Institute (LARSI), RSGM Unpad is a top referral hospital, offering both basic and specialized dental care. The hospital's success reflects the commitment to quality healthcare and education, attracting patients seeking professional dental services. As a teaching hospital, RSGM Unpad provides hands-on training for young dentists, emphasizing the importance of competence and performance in dental practice [8], [9].

Competence, as described by Spencer & Spencer, is a pivotal characteristic influencing individuals' problem-solving abilities, coping mechanisms, and actions throughout life. It encompasses knowledge, skills, traits, motives, and self-concept, forming the foundation for effective performance [10]. The Indonesian Dental Competency Standards (SKGDI), mandated by the Indonesian Medical Council, define the minimum competencies for dental graduates, developed through stakeholder consensus involving associations, ministries, and teaching hospitals. These standards encompass six domains: Professionalism, Mastery of Medical and Dental Sciences, Physical Examination, Restoration of Function, Oral Health and Community Dentistry, and Practice Management, reflecting ethical conduct, clinical proficiency, preventive care, public health initiatives, and managerial skills in dental practice [11]. Performance, on the other hand, refers to the actual execution of tasks and responsibilities within specific contexts [12], [13], [14], [15], [16].

Confidence, as defined by McClelland and Lauster, encompasses internal control, self-awareness, responsibility, and a positive attitude that allows individuals to act without anxiety and interact effectively with others. It comprises dimensions such as self-acceptance, risk-taking, and competence, as outlined by Davies and Blackford. Positive thinking and managing negative emotions play crucial roles in boosting confidence, while supportive behaviors like goal-setting and taking initiative reinforce belief in one's abilities. Understanding the interplay between psychology and confidence levels is vital, as it can inform strategies to enhance confidence and ultimately impact the performance of young dentists, bolstering their psychological well-being and effectiveness in practice [17], [18], [19], [20], [21]. Self-confidence plays a crucial role in performance, influencing dentists' ability to provide optimal care and pass competency exams [13], [15], [22].

Research indicates a positive correlation between self-confidence, competence mastery, and performance among dental professionals.

The Competency Exam for Dental Profession Program Students, organized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, evaluates young dentists' readiness for practice. Self-confidence is essential for success in these exams, helping candidates overcome anxiety and doubts [23]. Furthermore, self-directed learning, characterized by students' initiative to master competencies independently, enhances self-confidence and performance [24], [25]. Institutions like RSGM Unpad incorporate self-directed learning methods into their curriculum to promote student autonomy and problem-solving skills [26].

Independence, as defined by Ali Buto and Yamin, denotes an individual's ability to function autonomously without relying on others, fostering adaptability and effective socialization within the community. It encompasses active learning processes, as described by Dharmawati and Brookfield, where individuals pursue knowledge and goals independently, free from external assistance. The dimensions of independent learning include the ability to work autonomously, problem-solving skills, responsibility, and competitiveness, all of which are influenced by an individual's psychological state. Mindset, emotions, and behaviors significantly impact independence levels, with positive mindsets, effective emotional management, and independent behaviors correlating with higher levels of independence. Understanding this relationship allows individuals to cultivate supportive psychological aspects, ultimately enhancing self-reliance and enabling them to achieve their full potential across various life domains [25], [27], [28], [29], [30], [30], [31].

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped dental education and clinical practice in Indonesia, leading to a greater emphasis on online learning and limited clinical exposure. Despite these challenges, institutions like RSGM Unpad continue to provide quality dental care and education, preparing young dentists for professional practice. Competence, performance, and self-confidence are critical factors in dental practice, influencing patient care and success in competency exams. Embracing self-directed learning can further enhance these attributes, empowering young dentists to thrive in their careers.

Therefore, this research was conducted to determine the influence of young dentists' perception of dental competence mastery on their self-confidence at Padjadjaran University Dental Hospital, as well as to examine the moderating effect of learning independence on the relationship between the perception of competence mastery and self-confidence of young dentists at Padjadjaran University Dental Hospital.

METHODS

This research was descriptive-verification research which utilized a quantitative methodology employing an analytical observational framework. Data will be collected using questionnaires containing closed-ended statements, allowing respondents to directly select the most suitable option from a graded scale. The measurement scale utilized is a modified Likert scale, comprising 4 options with scores ranging from 1 to 4. According to Yuniastuti, modifying the Likert scale into 4 levels eliminates the middle option due to reasons such as the dual meaning of the undecided category, which can lead to bias, and the tendency for respondents to choose the middle option, known as the central tendency effect. This methodological modification aims to enhance data accuracy and mitigate potential biases [32].

The data source for this study is both primary and secondary data. Primary data will be collected through a survey questionnaire method, accessible to the research sample. The determination of the sample size is done using the Slovin Formula, with a precision level set at 5%, resulting in 89 samples after calculation using the formula. The study

aims to gather data during November-December 2023, utilizing Google Forms for questionnaire distribution at the designated research site, Padjadjaran University Dental Hospital.

The questionnaire will include respondent demographics and 29 questions covering 3 variables: perception of dental competency mastery, self-confidence, and learning independence. The variables' questions are sourced from established standards and previous research studies. The research population consists of young dental professionals at the Dental Hospital and Faculty of Dentistry, Padjadjaran University. This research has obtained ethical clearance issued by the Research Ethics Committee of Islamic University of Bandung with reference number 222/KEPK-Unisba/XI/2023. The sampling technique employed is non-probability purposive sampling, targeting young dental professionals with specific inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria for this study comprise young dentists (dental interns) who are actively enrolled as students in the Dentistry Profession Education Program at the Faculty of Dentistry, Padjadjaran University, specifically those in their second year of the education program. Conversely, the exclusion criteria encompass young dentists (dental interns) enrolled in the Dentistry Profession Education Program at the Faculty of Dentistry, Padjadjaran University, who have not yet provided dental treatment to patients.

Validity tests examine the accuracy of questionnaire items in measuring variables, ensuring they reflect real conditions. In this study, the validity of the questionnaire was confirmed using Pearson Product Moment correlation, with a coefficient exceeding the preset threshold ($r_{table} = 0.208$), indicating validity. All statement items related to Perception of Dentist Competency Mastery (X), Self-Confidence (Y), and Learning Independence (Z) demonstrated valid correlations, meeting the criteria for good validity. Reliability tests assess the consistency of responses over time. In this research, reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha (α), with a threshold of $\alpha > 0.70$ indicating reliability.

Descriptive statistical analysis aims to provide an overview or description of collected data by examining the mean, highest, and lowest values [33]. The finding of this research shows respondents' average perception of Dentist Competency Mastery, with an overall score of 5436 and an average response of 3.05, categorizing their perception as "competent." In Self-Confidence variable, with a total score of 2315 and an average response of 3.25, categorizing self-confidence as "very high." Learning Independence with a total score of 2237 and an average response of 3.14, categorizing learning independence as "high."

This study will be examined using the moderated regression analysis (MRA) method to determine whether learning independence variable has a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived mastery of competencies and self-confidence.

RESULT

In this study, the moderated regression analysis was intended to determine the effect of perceived mastery of dentist competence on self-confidence moderated by learning independence. The regression model that will be formed is as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X + \beta_2Z + e_1$$

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X + \beta_2Z + \beta_3X*Z + e_2$$

where:

Y = self-confidence

β_0 = constanta

β_1 - β_3 = Regression Coefficients

X = perception of mastery of dentist competencies

Z = learning independence

X*Z = Perception of mastery of dentist competency moderated by learning

independence
 $e_{1,2}$ = error

Table 1. Calculation Results of Influence of Young Dentists' Perception of Dental Competence Mastery on Their Self-Confidence at Padjadjaran University Dental Hospital

Model	Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	4.362	2.284		1.910	.060
The Perception of Dentist Competency Mastery (X)	.231	.044	.541	5.213	.000
Learning Independence (Z)	.272	.117	.241	2.325	.022

a. Dependent Variable: Self-confidence (Y)

Table 1 above presents the results of our analysis, yielding the constant and regression coefficients for our model. The regression equation derived from this data, referred to as Model 1, is expressed as follows: $Y = 4.362 + 0.231X + 0.272Z + 0.464$. This equation can be understood in the following way: $\beta_0 = 4.362$, indicating that when the perception of dentist competency mastery and learning independence is zero, self-confidence will be 4.362 units. $\beta_1 = 0.231$ suggests that for every one-unit increase in the perception of dentist competency mastery, holding other variables constant, self-confidence will increase by 0.231 units. Similarly, $\beta_2 = 0.272$ implies that with a one-unit improvement in learning independence, and other variables constant, self-confidence will increase by 0.272 units.

Table 2. Calculation Results of the Moderating Effect of Learning Independence on the Relationship Between the Perception of Competence Mastery and Self-Confidence of Young Dentists at Padjadjaran University Dental Hospital

Model	Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	28.900	6.187		4.671	.000
The Perception of Dentist Competency Mastery (X)	-.210	.112	-.491	-1.869	.065
Learning Independence (Z)	-.701	.255	-.621	-2.752	.007
The Perception of Dentist Competency Mastery (X) * Learning Independence (Z)	.017	.004	1.774	4.213	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Self-confidence (Y)

The data presented in Table 2 reveals the constant and regression coefficients, resulting in the creation of Regression Equation Model 2: $Y = 28.900 - 0.210X - 0.701Z + 0.017X*Z + 0.384$. This equation can be understood in the following manner: If both the perception of dentist competency mastery and learning independence are absent (0), self-confidence stands at 28.900 units (β_0). With an increase in the perception of

dentist competency mastery by one unit, keeping other factors constant, self-confidence decreases by 0.210 units (β_1). Similarly, a one-unit improvement in learning independence, with other factors unchanged, leads to a decrease in self-confidence by 0.701 units (β_2). However, an increase in the perception of dentist competency mastery moderated by learning independence by one unit, while other variables remain constant, results in a rise in self-confidence by 0.017 units (β_3). This suggests that learning independence enhances the relationship between the perception of dentist competency mastery and self-confidence.

DISCUSSION

The discussion section of this article presents a comprehensive analysis of young dentists' perceptions of competency, self-confidence, and learning independence at RSGM Universitas Padjadjaran. It elucidates various dimensions of competency perception, highlighting areas of strength and areas for improvement within dental education and practice.

The study delves into the perceptions of competency among young dentists at RSGM Universitas Padjadjaran, exploring various dimensions. The findings reveal a perceived level of competency across different domains, with professionalism ranking highest and the restoration of stomatognathic function ranking lowest. Interestingly, a propensity towards evidence-based dentistry analysis garners the highest score in professionalism, while communication with diverse patients receives the lowest score, potentially influenced by changes in learning methods induced by the pandemic [34], [35], [36], [37]. Comparing these findings with previous research provides a broader context. It underscores the importance of understanding how shifts in educational methodologies, such as those induced by the pandemic, impact professional skills development among young dentists. Additionally, integrating knowledge for effective healthcare services ranks highest in mastery of medical and dental sciences, while basic sciences mastery ranks lowest, indicating a commitment to lifelong learning traits [38], [39]. To situate the study within the broader context of existing research on dental competency, self-confidence, and learning independence, it's essential to include relevant literature reviews. Previous studies have shown that increased practice in a competency area boosts confidence, highlighting the ongoing need for improvements in managerial skills and ergonomics among young dentists [40], [41], [42]. In terms of practical implications, the findings shed light on the strengths and areas for improvement in dental education and clinical practice. For instance, while young dentists demonstrate competency in organizing practices, there's a notable gap in ergonomic managerial skills. This suggests challenges in applying ergonomic knowledge to clinical settings [43], [44]. Addressing these gaps through tailored educational interventions can enhance the preparedness of young dentists for the complexities of clinical practice.

Self-confidence, comprising elements of professionalism, knowledge mastery, and practice management, was assessed through questionnaires at Universitas Padjadjaran RSGM. Results indicate a generally high level of self-confidence among participants, with knowledge mastery ranking highest and practice management lowest. In terms of professionalism, effective teamwork received the highest score, while communication skills with patients scored the lowest. Effective doctor-patient communication, as highlighted by previous research, is essential for therapy outcomes and patient satisfaction [42], [43], [44], [45]. Contrasting these results with earlier studies enhances our comprehension. It emphasizes the importance of effective communication and efficient practice management in enhancing self-confidence among young dentists. This broader context underscores the ongoing need to prioritize the development of these skills to bolster confidence and improve patient care outcomes [46]. Relevant literature reviews should be incorporated to situate this study within the broader context of existing

research on dental competency, self-confidence, and learning independence. Previous studies have demonstrated the critical role of self-management in improving time management skills, thereby enhancing work efficiency, job satisfaction, and stress reduction [47], [48]. From a practical standpoint, these findings underscore the necessity of focusing on effective communication and practice management skills in dental education. By addressing these areas, educational programs can better equip young dentists to navigate the complexities of clinical practice and deliver high-quality patient care. Furthermore, emphasizing the importance of continuous skill development can help cultivate confidence and competence among dental professionals, ultimately benefiting practitioners and patients.

The study focuses on the self-directed learning variable, assessing indicators such as the ability to work independently, problem-solving skills, sense of responsibility, and competitive drive among young dentists at RSGM Universitas Padjadjaran. Self-directed learning is found to be generally high, with the sense of responsibility scoring the highest and the ability to work independently scoring the lowest. Comparing these findings with previous research enriches our understanding. The study aligns with existing literature emphasizing the importance of fostering self-directed learning skills among dental professionals. It underscores the need for educational programs to promote independence in knowledge acquisition and problem-solving [49], [50] [51] [52], [53]. To situate this study within the broader context of existing research on dental competency, self-confidence, and learning independence, it's essential to incorporate relevant literature reviews. Previous studies have shown that while there may be a high tendency to seek answers independently, there could be challenges such as procrastination tendencies affecting the ability to work independently effectively [49], [50]. From a practical standpoint, these findings underscore the importance of incorporating strategies to foster self-directed learning in dental education. Addressing challenges such as procrastination tendencies and promoting active participation in patient case discussions can enhance young dentists' ability to work independently and develop problem-solving skills. Furthermore, cultivating a sense of responsibility and encouraging engagement in scientific activities can contribute to continuous learning and professional development within the field. By aligning educational practices with the promotion of self-directed learning, dental education programs can better prepare future dentists to navigate the evolving landscape of healthcare effectively.

The regression model demonstrates a significant relationship between dentist competency perception and confidence among young dentists at RSGM Universitas Padjadjaran. Interviews with young dentists corroborate this, indicating that a sense of competence in their skills positively impacts confidence levels, particularly in performing dental procedures and delivering patient care, including diagnosis and treatment techniques. Comparing these findings with previous research enriches our understanding. Studies across various fields, such as education and healthcare, have consistently shown that mastery of skills is associated with increased confidence. For instance, in teaching, educators' proficiency in using technology enhances their confidence, while in healthcare, junior doctors' procedural competency boosts their confidence levels. It's crucial to incorporate relevant literature reviews to provide a broader context. The Indonesian Dentist Competency Standards, outlined in Regulation No. 40 of 2015 by the Indonesian Medical Council, emphasize integrating competency standards into dental education curricula. This underscores the importance of aligning educational practices with competency standards to foster confidence among young dentists. From a practical perspective, these findings underscore the significance of integrating competency-based education into dental curricula. By aligning educational practices with competency standards and emphasizing skill mastery, dental education programs can effectively nurture confidence among young dentists. This, in turn, can

enhance the quality of patient care and contribute to overall improvements in dental practice. Moreover, recognizing the pivotal role of competency perception in shaping confidence levels highlights the need for ongoing assessment and support to ensure that young dentists feel adequately prepared and confident in their professional abilities.

Regression model 1 underscores the positive influence of learning independence on the confidence levels of young dentists. Both calculated t-values and p-values demonstrate significant impacts, indicating that engaging in independent learning enhances competence, subsequently boosting confidence during patient interactions. This aligns with interviews conducted, revealing the crucial role of self-directed learning in fostering confidence among dental professionals. Self-directed learning, influenced by internal factors such as self-confidence and motivation, as well as external factors like the learning environment, underscores the importance of autonomy in learning for confidence development [24], [30], [54], [55]. Studies consistently highlight the correlation between self-directed learning and confidence across various professions. The interplay between self-directed learning and confidence underscores its significance in personal development and professional practice [24], [30], [54], [55]. To situate this study within the broader context of existing research on dental competency, self-confidence, and learning independence, it's essential to incorporate relevant literature reviews. Previous research emphasizes the pivotal role of self-directed learning in fostering personal responsibility, discipline, and autonomy in decision-making, all of which contribute to confidence development. Factors such as home environment and parental support significantly influence self-directed learning, highlighting the multifaceted nature of its determinants [56], [57], [58]. From a practical standpoint, these findings underscore the importance of promoting self-directed learning in dental education. By fostering autonomy in learning and providing support systems conducive to independent learning, educational programs can empower young dentists to cultivate confidence and enhance their professional practice effectively.

Regression model 2, represented by the equation Y, reveals a significant interaction between perception of dental competency mastery and learning independence in influencing confidence levels among young dentists. The calculated t-value and p-value reject the null hypothesis, indicating a significant partial moderating effect of learning independence on this interaction. Perceptions of competency mastery are crucial for job quality, with factors such as knowledge, experience, and skills playing integral roles. Comparing these findings with previous research enriches our understanding. Studies consistently highlight the significant impact of both competence perception and self-directed learning on job quality and confidence levels among professionals. The interplay between these factors underscores their importance in professional development and performance improvement [56], [57], [58]. To situate this study within the broader context of existing research on dental competency, self-confidence, and learning independence, it's crucial to incorporate relevant literature reviews. Previous research emphasizes the multifaceted nature of competency perception formation, influenced by observation, knowledge, experience, and personal background. Additionally, self-directed learning, essential for fostering personal responsibility and discipline, significantly impacts job quality and confidence [56], [57], [58]. From a practical perspective, these findings highlight the interconnectedness of competence perception, learning independence, and confidence in shaping professional practice. Dental education programs should foster a conducive learning environment that promotes competency mastery and independent learning. By recognizing and nurturing these factors, educational institutions can effectively enhance the confidence and performance of young dentists in clinical practice.

CONCLUSION

Based on the calculations and analyses conducted in this research, it can be concluded that the perception of competency mastery among young dentists at the Dental and Oral Hospital of Universitas Padjadjaran falls within the competent (high) category, the level of self-confidence among young dentists at the Dental and Oral Hospital of Universitas Padjadjaran is classified as very high, and the level of learning independence among young dentists at the Dental and Oral Hospital of Universitas Padjadjaran is categorized as high. Moreover, it is also concluded that the perception of competency mastery significantly influences the self-confidence of young dentists at the Dental and Oral Hospital of Padjadjaran University. Lastly, learning independence significantly moderates the perception of competency mastery of dentists and the self-confidence of young dentists at the Dental and Oral Hospital of Padjadjaran University.

Moving forward, the faculty must uphold and strengthen the competency of young dentists through constructive feedback and resources that promote learning independence. Integrating self-directed learning practices and encouraging participation in scientific activities are essential for students' professional development. Support from faculty ensures students thrive in clinical environments. Future research should explore additional variables influencing self-confidence by conducting literature reviews and examining the four key components of superior performance outlined by Spencer & Spencer, such as knowledge, skills, traits, and self-concept. Moreover, expanding the research framework to include other relevant variables would provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting performance.

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